

A N  
A P O L O G Y

For the People called

## Q U A K E R S.

Containing some REASONS for their not  
complying with Human Injunctions and In-  
stitutions in Matters relative to the Worship  
of GOD.

*Published by the Meeting for Sufferings of the  
said People at Philadelphia, in Pursuance of  
the Directions of their Yearly Meeting, held at  
Burlington, for Pennsylvania and New-Jersey,  
the 24th Day of the Ninth Month, 1756.*

**I**T is well known that the Province of Pennsylvania was  
first settled by a Number of pious, sober, and substan-  
tial People (mostly) Members of the religious Society  
called Quakers, who had many Years suffered grievous  
Persecutions in their native Country, for their faithful con-  
scientious Testimony against complying with Human Insti-  
tutions and Injunctions in Matters of Faith and Worship.

That by their Patience and Meekness in Sufferings, and  
their Integrity, Sobriety, and Honesty, in the Course of  
their Conduct, they clearly approved themselves to be the  
sincere Followers and Disciples of Christ, and were by Royal  
Authority entrusted with many valuable and extensive Rights  
and Privileges, to be enjoyed with the Property they had  
purchased in the Soil of the Province, which induced them,  
without any Expence to the Government, to cross the Seas,  
and settle and improve it tho' at that Time a Wilderness;  
and

and by the 35th Section of the first Laws made under the Royal Charter, the most clear and determinate Assurance was made to them and their Successors, that *so long as they lived peaceably and justly under the Civil Government, they should in no ways be molested or prejudiced for their religious Persuasion or Practice, nor be compelled at any Time to frequent or maintain any religious Worship, Place, or Ministry, contrary to their religious Persuasion.* These Privileges were confirmed by our worthy first Proprietor WILLIAM PENN, by the 8th Article of the present Charter of Privileges granted by him, in these Words. "But because the Happiness of Mankind depends so much upon the Enjoyment of Liberty of their Consciences, as aforesaid, I do hereby solemnly declare, promise, and grant, for me, my Heirs, and Assigns, that the 1st Article of this Charter relating to Liberty of Conscience, and every Part and Clause therein, according to the true Intent and Meaning thereof, shall be kept and remain without any Alteration inviolably for ever."

From the first Settlement of this Province, till within a few Years past, the Administration of the Laws was committed chiefly to Men of the same Principles with the first Settlers, and by the Divine Blessing, on their religious Concern for the present and future Prosperity and Happiness of the People, Virtue and true Religion were promoted and encouraged, Vice and Irreligion were discouraged, Peace, Tranquility, and Plenty remained in the Land; and the Enjoyment of religious and civil Liberty was inviolably preserved.

We profess and acknowledge the same religious Principles our Predecessors published to the World, and since by the Permission of Infinite Wisdom, the Peace of this Province hath been interrupted, and the desolating Calamities of War experienced by our distressed Fellow-Subjects on the Frontier Settlements, We have been affectionately concerned in true Sympathy, freely contributed towards their Relief; and often been engaged both in publick and private to put up our Supplications to Almighty God on their Behalf; and by the constant Tenor of our Conduct, manifested that to fear God, honour the King, and promote Peace and Piety among Men are acknowledged by us as our indispensable Duties; yet ever since we were a People we have had a Testimony against meer Formality and human Injunctions in Matters of Religion and the Worship of God; and

and being taught by the Precepts of our Lord *JESUS CHRIST*, the Testimonies of his Apostles, and our own Experience, that the Worship and Prayer which God will accept, can only be performed and offered by the immediate Assistance of the Holy Spirit; we are conscientiously concerned to maintain our religious Dissent from formal and ceremonious Injunctions; by which sett Forms or Times are appointed in Man's Will for divine Worship; "For though the Jews in the first Covenant had many Fasts and Feasts, and Holy Days, as the Feasts of the New Moon, and Passover, and Feasts of unleavened Bread, Pentecost, the Feasts of Tabernacles, and the Feasts of Dedication, which are largely shewed in the Books of *Moses*," yet even in that Time when the Observation of Fasts and appointed Days was thus enjoined, the LORD by the Prophet declared, "he was weary to bear their appointed Feasts, that their solemn Meeting was Iniquity," because for want of a proper Disposition of Heart to seek and serve him, their Hearts remained polluted. "Ye shall not fast as ye do this Day, to make your Voice to be heard on high. Is it such a Fast that I have chosen, a Day for a Man to afflict his Soul? Is it to bow down his Head as a Bulrush, and to spread Sack-cloth and Ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a Fast and an acceptable Day to the LORD? Is not this the Fast that I have chosen, to loose the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppressed go free, and that ye break every Yoke? Is it not to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and that thou bring the Poor that are cast out, to thy House; when thou seest the Naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own Flesh, then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." From which it appears that even when publick Fasts were observed by divine Appointment, yet the LORD declared his Disapprobation of them, when the Observers thereof did not manifest their Sincerity by suitable Fruits of Repentance and Amendment of Life. But we dare not comply with Injunctions of that Kind, as the Dispensation in which those outward Observations were enjoined, is now ceased. Christ our holy Head and High-Priest, who is the Substance of that which was pointed to and hoped for, enjoins his Followers the Observance of a daily universal Fast. A Fast from every thing which has not a Tendency to purify and perfect the Soul,

*F. Howgill's Works, p.*

430.

*Isaiah i. 10 to 15.*

*Isaiah lviii. 4 to 9.*



Soul, and render it more and more fit to become the Tabernacle of the Holy Ghost. He positively requires of his Disciples and Followers that, "they deny themselves, take up  
 Mat. xvi. 24. "their Cross and follow him; and that they watch and  
 Luke xxi. 36. "pray always, that they may be accounted worthy to stand  
 "before him." That in the primitive Churches they saw  
 an End of these Shadows of Things to come, and were  
 brought to Him, the Substance, in whom all Figures and  
 Shadows do End, is manifest from the repeated Expressions  
 of the Apostle Paul, "For Christ is the End of the Law for  
 "Righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4. But now  
 "hath he obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much also  
 "he is the Mediator of a better Covenant which was establish'd  
 "upon better Promises," Heb. viii. 6. "But now after that  
 "ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn  
 "you again to the weak and beggarly Elements, whereunto ye  
 "desire again to be in Bondage. Ye observe Days and Months  
 "and Times and Years, I am afraid of you, lest I have be-  
 "flowed upon you labour in vain," Gal. iv. 9 to 11. "One  
 "Man esteemeth one Day above another; another esteemeth every  
 "Day alike. He that regardeth the Day, observeth it unto the  
 "LORD, and he that observeth not the Day, to the LORD  
 "he doth not observe it. Let us not therefore judge one another  
 "any more, but judge this rather, that no Man put a Stumbling-  
 "Block, or an Occasion to fall in his Brother's Way," Rom. xiv.  
 5, 6, & 13. "Let no Man therefore judge you in Meat or  
 "Drink, or in Respect of a Holy-Day, or of the New Moon,  
 "or of the Sabbath Days, which are a Shadow of Things to  
 "come, but the Body is of Christ," Col. ii. 16, 17. And  
 we apprehend that the Practice and Testimony of our Fore-  
 fathers is truly consistent therewith, as will appear on a Pe-  
 rusal of their Writings, and particularly those of our wor-  
 thy Friends William Penn and Robert Barclay "We cannot,  
 W. Penn's Works, vol. 2, p. 875. "in Conscience to God, observe Holy-Days (so called) the publick  
 "Fasts and Feasts, because of their human Institution and Ordi-  
 "nation, and that they have no Divine Warrant, but are ap-  
 R. Barclay's Apology, p. 563. "pointed in the Will of Man." "Even as we have suffered  
 "much in our Native Country because we neither could  
 "ourselves bear Arms nor send others in our Place, nor  
 "give our Money for the buying of Drums, Standards, and  
 "other Military Attire; and lastly, because we could not  
 "hold our Doors, Windows, and Shops close for Con-  
 "science Sake, upon such Days as Fasts and Prayers were  
 "appointed, for to desire a Blessing upon, and Success for  
 "the

"the Arms of the Kingdom or Common-Wealth, under  
 "which we live, neither give Thanks for the Victories  
 "acquired by the Effusion of much Blood, by which for-  
 "cing of the Conscience, they would have constrained our  
 "Brethren, living in divers Kingdoms, at War together,  
 "to have implored our God for contrary and contradictory  
 "Things, and consequently impossible; for it is impossible  
 "that two Parties fighting together should both obtain the  
 "Victory; and because we cannot concur with them in this  
 "Confusion, therefore we are subject to Persecution. Yea  
 "and others, who with us do witness, that the Use of Arms  
 "is unlawful to Christians, do look askint upon us: But  
 "which of us two do most faithfully observe this Testi-  
 "mony against Arms? either they, who at certain Times,  
 "at the Magistrates Order, do close up their Shops and  
 "Houses, and meet in their Assemblies, praying for the  
 "Prosperity of their Arms, or giving Thanks for some  
 "Victory or other, whereby they make themselves like to  
 "those that approve Wars and Fighting: Or we, which  
 "cannot do these Things, for the same Cause of Conscience,  
 "lest we should destroy by our Works, what we establish  
 "in Words? We shall leave to the Judgment of all pru-  
 "dent Men."

And as we can appeal to the Searcher of Hearts, that  
 our Testimony herein proceeds from inward Conviction and  
 a Principle of Conscience, and not from Perverseness, Ob-  
 stinacy, or Disrespect to our Superiors, We hope the most  
 charitable and christian Construction will be put upon our  
 Conduct, in thus dissenting from the Practice of other Pro-  
 fessors of Christianity: For though we think ourselves well  
 warranted in adhering to the Precepts of our Lord JESUS  
 CHRIST, who enjoind his Followers, that "*when they* Mat. vi. 16.  
 "*fasted they should not appear unto Men to fast, but unto their*  
 "*Father who seeth in secret.*" Nevertheless it is far from  
 us to censure or condemn such who sincerely esteem it their  
 Duty to observe in Humility of Soul, Days and Times of  
 Fasting and Prayer. Our Intention and Desire is to pre-  
 serve our Privileges, both Religious and Civil, and to  
 maintain that Liberty of Conscience we are intituled to by  
 the Laws of this Province. Conscience is God's Preroga-  
 tive, he is the Supreme Lord, Judge, and Guide thereof.  
 "Nor are we so ignorant as to think it is within the reach of W. Penn's  
 "human Power to fetter Conscience, or to restrain its Liberty Works, vol.  
 "strictly 1, p. 445.

"strictly taken; but that plain English of Liberty of Conscience  
 "we would be understood to mean is this, namely, the Free  
 "and Uninterrupted Exercise of our Consciences in that Way of  
 "Worship, we are most clearly persuaded God requires us to  
 "serve him in (without endangering our undoubted Birthright  
 "of English Freedom) which being Matter of Faith, we sin if  
 "we omit, and they cannot do less, that shall endeavour it."

We have ever believed that it is by the Light or Gift of God that all true Knowledge in Things spiritual is received and revealed, and as the same is manifested and received in the Heart, by the Strength and Power thereof, all true Believers in Christ, come to the clear and distinct Knowledge of their Duty; and will be taught thereby when to Fast, and what to pray for as they ought: And as Prayer is the most awful and solemn Part of religious Worship, we esteem it our Duty to wait for divine Light and Understanding, that we may know the Will of God, otherwise we may ask amiss and not receive, "and by offering the Sacrifice of Fools  
 "do Evil"

Rom. viii.

26.

1 Cor. xiv.

15.

The most eminent and experienced Christians declared, they "knew not how to pray, or what to pray for as they  
 "ought, but as the Spirit itself helped their Infirmities with Sighs  
 "and Groanings, &c." And "they were to pray with the Spi-  
 "rit and with the Understanding." Surely then not in the Will of Man, nor because he appoints? Every thing we pray for should be in the Name or Power of JESUS, and according to the Will of God, who knows best what is most proper and convenient for us, and will tend most to his Glory and the good of his Creatures. And who can say that Adversity and Afflictions may not be productive of real Good, and a Means of bringing many to seek the Lord, who in a Time of Ease and Prosperity forgot and departed from him. For we have great Reason to acknowledge that the just Judgments of the Lord are now in the Land, and that there is Cause for deep penitential Humility and Mourning before him, that these Judgments may be removed from us; and if the People will make a right Improvement of them, and every particular Person reform one, as it is in the Power of every one under the Operation and Influence of divine Grace to do. This will be an acceptable Fast to the Lord, to fast from Pride, Strife, Contention, unnatural Heats, Broils, Animosities, Blood; from Luxury, Wanton-



Wantonness, Revellings, Drunkenness, Profaneness, Impiety, Covetousness, Deceit, Fraud, Infidelity, and all Manner of Evil; then might we have some well-grounded Reason to hope that the Scourge which hangs over us, will in due Time be removed, and we again be favour'd with Days of Peace and Tranquility.

There are some yet living in this Country, who are Witnesses that so long as the People lived in the Fear of God, walked in Humility before him, and kept his holy Law and Commandments, it went well with them and with their Children; the Land rejoic'd, the Blessing of the Most High was known and his powerful protecting Providence remarkably conspicuous; for tho' we had no outward Barrier, the Sword was not permitted to enter within our Borders, but the Salvation of the LORD was a Defence round about: But now Blood has been spilt, and the Land is polluted therewith, and the Sound of War is heard. Oh! that the Inhabitants may consider these Things and lay them to heart, before it be too late, and cry mightily to the Lord our GOD, turning to him with all our Hearts and imploring his Assistance, who, if our Ways please him, can arise for our Deliverance and cause our Enemies to be at Peace with us.

Signed on Behalf and by Appointment of our said Meeting for Sufferings, held at *Philadelphia*, the 29th of the 6th Month, 1757, by

JAMES PEMBERTON, *Clerk*.

Days of Peace and Tragedy.  
in the Time be removed, and we again be favoured with  
Kearson to hope that the scourge which hangs over us, will  
depart of Evil; then might we have some well grounded  
basis, Government, Peace, Union, Industry, and all  
Wanderers, Travellers, Drunkenness, Prostitution, Im-

There are some yet living in this Country, who are Wit-  
nesses that so long as the People lived in the Fear of God,  
and kept his holy Law and Commandments, I went well with them and with their Chil-  
dren; the Land rejoiced, the blessing of the Most High  
was known and his powerful protecting Providence remain-  
ably conspicuous; for tho' we had no outward Barrier, the  
sword was not permitted to enter within our borders; yet  
the salvation of the LORD was a Defence round about;  
the Law of the LORD was the light, and the Land is pre-  
served; and the sound of War's heard. O! that the  
Inhabitants may consider these Things and lay them to heart,  
before it be too late, and say mightily to the Lord our  
GOD, turning to him in their hearts and improving  
his Alliance, who, if only we remain, can assist for our  
Deliverance and cause of triumph to be a Troop with us.

Signed on behalf and by appointment of our said Master  
ing for Sufferings, held as following the 20th of the 1st  
Month, 1777, by

JAMES FEMBERTON, CAP.



